



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
**Planning Department**  
**General Plan Work Program Status**  
**June 2003**

On October 22, 2002, the City Council adopted the Strategic Framework Element and Action Plan. The General Plan work program, approved on February 12, 2003, by the City Council Land Use and Housing Committee, is based upon priority actions identified in the City Council-Adopted Strategic Framework Action Plan to be accomplished by 2008. The work program activities fall into the following five categories:

**1. Existing Conditions Data Collection**

The Planning Department is collecting citywide existing conditions data in GIS (Geographic Information System) format that can be used for future analysis on various actions including:

- ◆ Preparing a financing strategy for public facilities and infrastructure
- ◆ Amending or updating community plans
- ◆ Updating the General Plan
- ◆ Conducting environmental analysis

The goal is to expand the existing database used by the City of San Diego (SanGIS) in order to centralize pertinent information and data critical to effective and comprehensive planning efforts. The Planning Department is collecting data from other city departments, reviewing community specific data with the appropriate community planning groups, and working with community groups to validate the accuracy of the data.

Uptown was selected as the test case for collecting and reviewing data. This effort is now complete, and final maps for Uptown will be posted to the Planning Department website by July. The goal is to complete this effort citywide by June 2004.

**2. Pilot Villages**

The Pilot Village Program provides an opportunity to demonstrate how the village concept can be realized through the selection and construction of three Pilot Villages in the City of San Diego. This program is a critical component of the implementation program in part because The City Council established the program along with Strategic Framework Element adoption on October 22, 2002. This effort will require close coordination with community groups and organizations as well as all other City departments. Due to the uniqueness of this program, additional technical and financial expertise could be required at costs unknown at this time.

The Pilot Village Program provides an opportunity to demonstrate how the village concept

can be realized through the selection and construction of three Pilot Villages. It is a goal that this process will serve as a catalyst toward implementation of the City of Villages strategy around the City, and act as a model of possibility for every community in San Diego. This program is a critical component of the implementation program in part because it offers an opportunity to gain widespread public awareness of mixed use and higher density housing. The three sites will be selected, site planning work will take place, entitlement process will be initiated, and funding sources identified. Phase II will include procurement of funds, development approvals, and construction. Successful village development will be challenging and will require the City to partner with communities, developers, and other agencies.

The City Council established the program along with Strategic Framework Element adoption on October 22, 2002. Phase I of the selection process occurred from December 2, 2002 to March 14, 2003. On May 21, 2003, Mayor Murphy and Councilmember Atkins announced the seven pilot village applications that will move forward into the second phase of the selection process. Second phase applications are due in October 2003 and will be presented at Planning Commission in January 2004. The City Council will select the pilot villages in February 2004.

A package of pilot village incentives was presented to the Land Use and Housing Committee on May 21, 2003, where LU&H unanimously voted in support of it. The package will move forward to the full City Council for adoption after the summer recess.

### **3. Community Plan Initiatives**

Amendment Process - Revise the community plan amendment initiation and approval process to implement recommendations raised by the Planning Commission and City Council during the Strategic Framework hearing process that include: developing criteria for community plan amendments that propose an increase in residential density; ensuring that appropriate zoning is applied to implement the community plans; and preserving the integrity of community plans.

Priorities - Update existing criteria for prioritizing community plan amendments and updates to reflect policies in the Strategic Framework Element. Criteria to consider include: facilities needs, housing needs, the age of the community plan, the existence of important village opportunity areas, the degree of development pressure in a community, and community interest among other factors. Priorities will ultimately be decided by the City Council.

### **4. Financing Strategy**

A Financing Strategy for public facilities must be developed to continue progress toward ultimately securing additional funding to remedy existing facilities shortfalls. As part of the Public Facilities Element, the Planning Department will work with the City Manager to identify a broad range of citywide needs (including public facilities and infrastructure, maintenance, and open space acquisition) then link these needs to existing and new potential funding sources. This includes developing a structure for linking the community financing and phasing plans to the City's Capital Improvement Program. Ultimately, the City Council could potentially make decisions on funding sources and place financing measures on the ballot for a public vote.

The adopted Strategic Framework Element of the general plan identifies four approaches to pursue in the development of a Financing Strategy. These include: 1) Fiscal reform at the state and local level – the need to protect local government revenue by addressing the inequitable redistribution by the State of local property tax proceeds as compared with other major California cities; 2) “Regionalization” of infrastructure expense through steps such as applying a greater proportion of regional transportation funds to transit-oriented development; 3) Efficient use of shared resources, such as coordination with school districts and other local entities to create opportunities for the joint use of public facilities and activities; and 4) Additional user fee and revenue measures similar to those that are typically applied by similar cities in California, many of which would require a vote of City residents.

An Integrated Regional Infrastructure Strategy is under development by the San Diego Association of Governments with ongoing input from the region’s cities and the County. Regional infrastructure such as transportation, energy, water, and regional open space are included. This effort involves an infrastructure evaluation process, needs assessment, and public policy development. The types of financing and public policy options may include incentive based reprogramming of funds, public policy changes, and new funding sources. Key stakeholders are the infrastructure providers and local jurisdictions.

Other ongoing components of the Financing Strategy include proactive legislative work and strengthened inter-agency coordination.

## **5. General Plan Update**

The Strategic Framework Element is a new chapter of the General Plan. In order to implement this new element, all of the remaining General Plan elements must be updated, and a new Economic Prosperity Element prepared, to achieve internal consistency within the General Plan and to implement the City of Villages strategy. This will involve consolidating fourteen elements into eight. The update process will include coordination with various community and interest groups as well as other agencies and City departments.

The following status reports briefly summarize the current efforts on the eight updated elements.

### **5.1 Conservation Element Status Report**

#### **Staff Contact:**

Anna Shepherd

(619) 235-5233

[ashepherd@sandiego.gov](mailto:ashepherd@sandiego.gov)

#### **Background**

The original *1979 Conservation Element* provided a framework for the planned management, preservation and use of natural resources, including land (landforms, beaches, shoreline, erosion, soil, and agricultural land), water (rivers, streams, lakes, reservoirs, oceans, bays, lagoons, fisheries, pollution), minerals (sand, gravel, salt), ecology (vegetation, wildlife, major habitats, endangered species, human threats), and air. In 1997, the City Council amended the *Conservation Element* and the *Open Space Element* to reflect the goals of the *Multiple Species Conservation Program*.

The new Conservation Element will further integrate resource protection, pollution

prevention, efficient and sustainable land development, social equity, and environmental education.

### **Key Issues**

- Resource protection.
- Pollution prevention.
- Energy independence.
- Landform preservation and urban form.
- Waste management.
- Soil and mineral use and preservation.
- Biodiversity.
- Wetlands.
- Storm water pollution prevention.
- Water supply and quality.
- Efficient and sustainable land development.
- Social equity.
- Environmental education.

### **Status**

Staff is preparing a draft document that will be available for public review in September 2003. Staff will begin interdepartmental review of the document this summer. At this point, the document mainly contains policies from the Strategic Framework Element and other recently adopted city policies. The next steps are to determine which policies are sufficient as is and which need to be more tailored to San Diego. New policy options need to be developed through a public review process.

## **5.2 Economic Prosperity Element Status Report**

### **Staff Contact:**

Jean Cameron  
(619) 533-5954  
[jcameron@sandiego.gov](mailto:jcameron@sandiego.gov)

Lora Brill  
(619) 236-6465  
[lbrill@sandiego.gov](mailto:lbrill@sandiego.gov)

### **Background**

The City's existing Industrial, Commercial and Redevelopment Elements from the 1979 General Plan will be updated and incorporated into the new Economic Prosperity Element which will contain coordinated and comprehensive economic prosperity goals, objectives and implementation measures. Since much of the employment land is built-out, the new element will focus efficient utilization of existing employment areas and that new infill employment and retail commercial growth should be located in the easily accessible Villages, Subregional Districts and Centre City.

Economic trends will be updated based on current data. The importance of small business development and manufacturing will be discussed in terms of preserving and

creating middle-income employment opportunities. A more direct link between education and the work force will be established with key policies and actions regarding workforce training, including the issue of digital inclusion.

### **Key Issues**

- **Employment land use and availability:** intensification of employment uses and preservation of land for middle-income employment opportunities; collocation of employment and residential uses.
- **Expansion and diversification of the employment base:** business development and the role of small businesses.
- **Regional infrastructure:** regional collaboration to resolve regional growth issues and to meet economic prosperity goals.
- **Equitable development:** middle income jobs, living wage or alternative legislation, gentrification and policies to mitigate its negative aspects.
- **Education and workforce development:** schools as an integral part of our neighborhoods and equitable access to quality educational institutions.
- **United States – Mexico Border:** international coordination for border infrastructure, trade opportunities, and a bi-national village.

### **Status**

- An element outline has been developed and a list of community and interest group contacts is being developed to enable staff to ask for input on issues.
- The Strategic Framework Element and Action Plan calls for economic indicators to be developed for the San Diego communities. Staff has researched indicator initiatives nationwide for best practices and data sources. Based on these efforts a preliminary list of possible community economic indicators has been developed. Review, revision and suggestions from community members and interest groups are being solicited.
- Policies on industrial and residential collocation will be established as part of the economic prosperity element. Two projects currently applying for community plan amendments to locate residential uses in the Sorrento Mesa industrial area will contribute needed data to develop a policy regarding collocation.
- Preliminary research on living wage ordinances is underway. Interested members of the community will be invited to participate in ad hoc meetings to develop the element's living wage policy.

## **5.3 Housing Element and Housing Programs Status Report**

### **Staff Contact:**

Bill Levin  
(619) 235-5214  
[wlevin@sandiego.gov](mailto:wlevin@sandiego.gov)

Anna Shepherd  
(619) 235-5233  
[ashepherd@sandiego.gov](mailto:ashepherd@sandiego.gov)

### **Background**

The Housing Element identifies and analyzes the City's housing needs, establishes

reasonable goals, objectives and policies based on those needs, and sets forth a comprehensive five-year program to achieve the goals and objectives.

### **Key Issues**

- Housing production
- Regulations and incentives
- Financing and revenues
- Infrastructure
- Housing demand vs. supply
- Accessibility

### **Status:**

Planning Department staff will update the Housing Element with the objective of providing an adequate supply of housing to serve San Diegans of every economic level and demographic group. The Housing Element update was to begin in early 2003 with completion by spring 2004. Recently, SANDAG has requested that the State Department of Housing and Community Development grant a one year delay in the Housing Element update schedule for all jurisdictions in this region to allow the process of determining housing needs to proceed concurrently with SANDAG's Regional Comprehensive Planning process. This will delay work on some portions of the update until early 2004 and completion would be delayed until spring 2005.

### **Housing Programs**

Companion Unit Ordinance: State law requires that all cities in California allow ministerial review of companion unit development applications beginning on July 1, 2003. Staff has prepared revisions to the City's companion unit ordinance. The Community Planners Committee, the Planning Commission, and the Land Use and Housing Committee of the City Council have recommended the ordinance for adoption. The item will be heard at City Council on June 24, 2003.

Density Bonus Ordinance: Recent state law changes have expanded the density bonus requirements that all cities in California must comply with. Revisions to the City's density bonus regulations and an accompanying environmental document are being prepared by Planning Staff. Introduction of this item to the Planning Commission and City Council is tentatively scheduled for early summer.

Single Room Occupancy Ordinance: Housing Commission staff is preparing revisions to the SRO ordinance to clarify which properties are SROs and to modify conversion and relocation regulations. The goal is to better protect the dwindling supply of SROs. A specific schedule of meetings and hearings has not yet been established but this may move forward to Council in summer 2003.

Inclusionary Housing Ordinance: The City Council adopted an inclusionary housing ordinance on May 20, 2003. This citywide ordinance requires new housing developments of two or more units either build 10% of their units at specified affordability levels or pay an in lieu fee.

Affordable Housing Task Force: This Task Force, which was formed at the request of City Council, has made recommendations on a wide range of issues ranging from

options for financing affordable housing to improving the regulatory process to addressing tenant landlord issues. Recommendations will be presented to the Land Use and Housing Committee on June 18, 2003. Adoption of these recommendations could result in requests for the Planning Department and Housing Commission to modify their work programs to implement the proposed actions.

#### **5.4 Land Use Element Status Report**

##### **Staff Contact:**

Anna McPherson

(619) 533-5215

[amcpherson@sandiego.gov](mailto:amcpherson@sandiego.gov)

##### **Background**

State law identifies Land Use as a mandatory element in the General Plan. The current General Plan relies upon the forty plus community, subarea, specific, and precise plans to serve as the Land Use Element. The proposed Land Use Element will more fully establish and define the relationship between the General Plan and those community plans through a standardized format. It will provide policy guidance on how to write community plans to supplement citywide policies more appropriately located at the general plan level with community and neighborhood specific policy direction and implementation measures. The updated Land Use Element will also establish citywide land use recommendations to implement the City of Villages Strategy, identify land uses of citywide significance, and depict the citywide relationship between land use and all transportation systems. The updated element will also revise and incorporate all policies related to community plan amendments to address prioritization, and include criteria for those amendments that increase or add residential density. These new policies will assist the City in preserving the integrity of the General Plan and all community plans.

##### **Key Issues**

- Equitable development and environmental justice
- Regional policies to land use distribution and protection of unique resources and rural areas
- Noise policies
- Incorporation of a refined City of Villages Opportunity Areas Map
- Alternative development phasing proposal to address and update the Phased Development Areas System consistent with Proposition A (the 1985 Managed Growth Initiative).
- Update existing *Progress Guide and General Plan* Land Use Map

##### **Status**

- A list of community member and interest group contacts is being developed to enable staff to ask for input on issues.
- On August 6, 2003, Land Use and Housing, a committee of the City Council, will discuss the community plan amendment process and potential revisions to preserve the integrity of community plans.
- The preparation of existing conditions data bases are underway for each community plan area. This information will be used as a foundation study for the Land Use Element.

- Research is underway to determine how to best define the linkage between the General Plan and community plans.

## 5.5 Mobility Element Status Report

### **Staff Contact:**

Nancy Bragado

619-533-4549

[nsbragado@sandiego.gov](mailto:nsbragado@sandiego.gov)

### **Background:**

The proposed Mobility Element will replace the Transportation Element which was last updated in 1985. Comprehensive amendments to the element are needed to shift the emphasis from road building to multi-modal strategies as the solution to congestion. Specific amendments are needed to:

- Reflect Strategic Framework Element recommendations to implement the Transit First strategy and the Regional Transit Vision;
- Implement the City of Villages goal to develop a multi-modal transportation system;
- Focus on the mobility, environmental, and health benefits of walkable communities;
- Update existing conditions, planned network maps, and proposed investments using Mobility 2030 (the Regional Transportation Plan) as a base;
- Link the planned transportation network to the new Land Use Element; and
- Incorporate new policies related to environmental justice.

In summary, the importance of all modes of transportation and the link to land use planning in meeting mobility goals will have a greater emphasis in the new Mobility Element.

### **Key Issues**

- **Land use and transportation:** better integrate land use and transportation by focusing much of the City's new growth within walking distance of transit services.
- **Environmental quality:** recognize the broad environmental impacts from motor vehicle operations and infrastructure and seek to minimize those impacts.
- **Streets and highways:** improve driving conditions and balance the needs of multiple users of the public right-of-way.
- **Transit First:** support implementation of a transit system that is so attractive and convenient that transit will become the first choice of travel for many trips.
- **Walking and bicycling:** design and retrofit our city so that walking and bicycling are safe, comfortable, and common forms of transportation.
- **Parking management:** address parking supply and demand to meet the needs of multiple users, while reducing the amount of land devoted to the automobile.
- **Environmental justice:** develop transportation policies and programs that result in the fair treatment of all people.
- **Financing:** influence and prioritize the collection and use of transportation revenues.
- **Monitoring:** develop new multi-modal measures of mobility.
- **Airports, goods movement, freight, and noise:** sections to be updated.



### **Status**

- An element outline has been developed and posted on the City's website for comment.
- Ongoing collaboration with SANDAG on the Regional Transportation Plan, Congestion Management Program, and other mobility issues has occurred.
- Research has been conducted on mobility issues including parking, public health impacts, environmental justice, and others.
- A preliminary draft of the Mobility Element, which expands upon adopted Strategic Framework Element policies, is being prepared.
- An ad hoc committee, and a broader contact list of individuals and organizations interested in transportation issues, is being developed.

## **5.6 Public Facilities, Services, and Safety Element Status Report**

### **Staff Contact:**

Paul Fiske  
(619) 235-5204  
[pfiske@sandiego.gov](mailto:pfiske@sandiego.gov)

### **Background**

The Public Facilities, Services, and Safety Element addresses those facilities and services that are publicly managed and which have a direct influence on the location of land uses. These include schools, libraries, police, fire, water, sanitation, and flood control. The revised Element will focus on the establishment of citywide priorities in providing facilities.

It will further provide guidance for the Community Plan Facilities Elements, establishing facilities standards that are flexible yet able to produce an equivalent level of service. The Element will also identify financing options for the facilities needed to serve village development, including private investment. It will further include policies to maintain service levels as the population grows.

The existing Element, adopted in 1979, emphasized the importance of timely development of facilities and services so as not to impact the capacity and ability of the City to provide the service. Findings in the 1979 Element did not, however, anticipate the severe infrastructure financing constraints that have developed over the last two decades, beginning with voter-adopted property tax restrictions.

These fiscal constraints have impacted all California cities, yet San Diego utilizes fewer general revenue sources than most other medium and large cities in the State. Therefore, in addition to the goal of State-local fiscal reform that could benefit the City, alternative methods of financing public facilities will be addressed as identified by the Strategic Framework Element and through the plan update process.

### **Key Issues**

Several additions to the Public Facilities, Services, and Safety Element are needed to:

- Reflect the adopted Strategic Framework Element recommendations on key policies in order to address the phasing of new development and the preparation of public facilities plans;

- Implement the City of Villages strategy through prioritization of citywide and community facility needs;
- Incorporate public amenities into village projects
- Encourage the use of shared resources; and
- Identify user fee and taxation measures similar to those used by peer cities within the State to provide needed facilities such as parks, libraries, fire stations, and local street/pedestrian improvements and amenities including those that facilitate transit use.

### **Status**

Various facilities financing measures were studied and reported on by an independent municipal financial advisor during preparation of the Strategic Framework; based on this study a list of potential options was prepared by the Strategic Framework Citizen Finance Subcommittee in 2002. An outline of topic areas has also been prepared regarding the organization of an updated public facilities element.

## **5.7 Recreation Element Status Report**

### **Staff Contact:**

Jennifer Flynn  
(619) 533-6508  
[jaflynn@san Diego.gov](mailto:jaflynn@san Diego.gov)

### **Background**

The existing Recreation Element provides a framework for a comprehensive public recreation system. It contains recommendations for: population-based centers, resource-based parks, other recreational accommodations, and class/programs/activities. The existing element emphasizes the combination of land, facilities, and staff services as vital elements for a constructive and enjoyable use of leisure time. It recognizes that recreation land may be difficult to acquire in the already developed parts of the city and states that “an idea balance of recreational opportunities cannot be achieved through just city-wide application of numerical standards for physical facilities. These standards are important, however, they should be used with discretion rather than mechanically.” Most of the recommendations in the existing Recreation Element are still valid; others require editing and/or updating.

Many of the policies will be taken directly from the Strategic Framework Element and Action Plan, or from the existing Recreation Element. A comprehensive update of the element will include the drafting of new policies and strategies to address the acquisition, design and development of new parks and recreational resources. Planning and Park and Recreation staff will work with a consultant to develop a Park and Recreation Master plan to supplement and implement Recreation Element policies with detailed information about park and recreation inventories, conditions, and linkages, and acquisition and development strategies.

### **Key Issues**

- **Recreation opportunities and access:** opportunities for and multi-modal accessibility to active and passive recreation including but not limited to: neighborhood/community/regional parks, structures within park and recreational

areas, public plazas, pocket parks, urban trails, linear parks, joint use facilities, and beaches.

- **Community diversity:** how park and recreation resources can be tailored to meet the needs and desires of the City's unique communities and neighborhoods.
- **Joint use:** joint use opportunities between schools, parks, libraries, childcare facilities, and other public facilities and services.
- **Open space recreation:** open space and urban trails as outdoor recreation.
- **Park guidelines:** discussion of population and accessibility based park and recreation guidelines.
- **Park and Recreation Master Plan:** Supplemental document to the Recreation Element policies containing detailed information about our park and recreation inventories, conditions, and linkages. The master plan will also provide a detailed implementation strategy to address and remedy deficiencies.

### **Status**

- Work on the Recreation Element has not begun in an official capacity at this time due to staffing resources. An outline of topic and policy areas, however, is available for review and comment.
- The ongoing Existing Conditions Data Collection (ECDC) effort is inventorying the existing park, open space, and recreation centers in the City.
- On June 4, 2003, Land Use and Housing, a committee of the City Council, voted to support the preparation of a Park and Recreation Master Plan. The ECDC will serve as a background study for the master plan. The Park and Recreation Department is in the process of seeking funds for a Park Master Plan.

## **5.8 Urban Design Element Status Report**

### **Staff Contact:**

Jean Cameron

(619) 533-5954

[jcameron@sandiego.gov](mailto:jcameron@sandiego.gov)

### **Background**

The existing Urban Design Element provides direction citywide for design of public and private development, circulation, infrastructure, and natural and open spaces. It contains many of the policies addressed in the Strategic Framework Element such as recognizing the significance of the natural topography, directing density to compact, urban areas, promoting mixed-use and "green" construction, integrating new development into the existing neighborhood character and encouraging multimodal transportation with pedestrian, bike and transit facilities. Many of these recommendations are still valid, however the language will need to be updated to reflect the current status of the City as one which has nearly completed build-out and where new development will be focused in mixed-use villages functioning as community centers. Transit-oriented design, planning for pedestrians, and mixed-use development will need significantly more detail to respond to the high significance that Strategic Framework core values place on these issues.

### **Key Issues**

- **Urban form and the natural environment.** analysis of existing urban growth patterns, preservation of the natural base, scenic views and public view corridors; protection of natural areas and the development of public open space and trail systems; efficient land development that conserves natural resources and the shoreline.
- **Urban infill development - creating neighborhoods.** preservation of neighborhood character, continuity, and identity; public safety through defensible space design; diverse architecture that complements the surrounding neighborhood; integration of public facilities, public and civic uses, open space to existing neighborhoods; creation of neighborhood identity, themes and landmarks; design policies for the regional center, subregional districts, urban and neighborhood villages, and transit corridors.
- **Street design.** design of street systems for maximum interconnectivity and streetscapes which enhance the pedestrian and bike experience, increase safety and accessibility; design of transit systems design to enhance visual clarity through signage lighting, and stop designs; route clarity and visual enhancements on freeways and major thoroughfares.
- **Arts and culture.** integrate arts and cultural resources into neighborhoods; incorporate historic character and artifacts into new development; support neighborhood festivals and celebrations.
- **Historic resources.** focusing redevelopment away from historic areas and preservation of historic and prehistoric resources.

### **Status**

- The existing conditions reports being prepared for each community are identifying public view corridors.
- Stakeholder groups and potential ad hoc committee participants for the various issue areas are being identified for public input purposes.

For additional information please visit our website at [www.sandiego.gov/cityofvillages](http://www.sandiego.gov/cityofvillages) or call our hotline at 619-235-5226. You can also email comments to [planning@sandiego.gov](mailto:planning@sandiego.gov).



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202 C Street, MS 5A  
San Diego, CA 92101